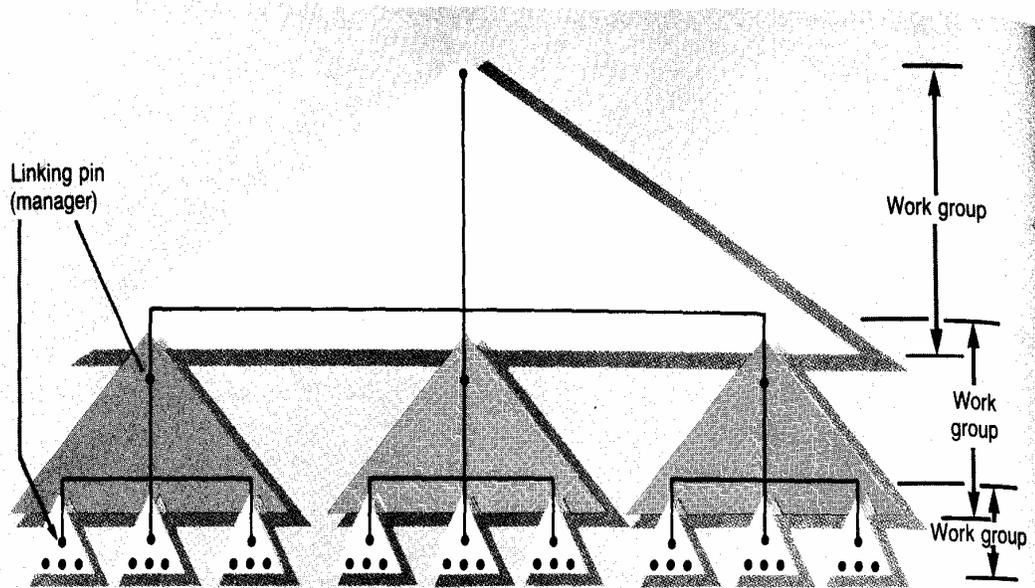


UNDERSTANDING WORK GROUPS

- **Group** – number of persons who interact with one another on a face-to-face basis over a span of time and perceive themselves to be a group.
- **Primary Group** – has all the characteristics of a group but also has feelings of loyalty, comradeship, and a common sense of values amongst its members.
- **Work groups** – describes groups in organizations.
- **Formal work groups** – have a defined structure and are formally recognized by the organization.
- **Informal work groups** – result from personal contacts and interactions of people; usually not formally recognized by the organizations.

- **The Linking-Pin Concept** – Rensis Likert proposed the linking pin concept to describe management's role in work groups. Likert contends that management should consciously try to build these groups. Managers have overlapping group memberships and link these groups to the total organization. Thus the manager is the linking pin in the organization.



Source: Rensis Likert, *New Patterns of Management* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. 104.

THE LINKING-PIN CONCEPT

TEAM BUILDING



SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE TEAM BUILDING

- 1. Establish a working environment that is considered to be fair and equitable by employees.**
- 2. Practice participation—listen to employees' ideas and get them involved in planning.**
- 3. Show the employees that you, the manager who represents higher levels of management, also see issues from the employees' side.**
- 4. Attempt to gain acceptance as the group's leader.**

- **To build an effective team, the manager must establish a working environment that is seen as fair and equitable. This cannot be done by one manager alone. All levels of management must contribute. However, if a manager does not establish this environment in the work unit, the efforts of higher levels of management will usually be wasted. Second, employee participation in working out changes, and keeping them informed about what is taking place, also helps build an effective team.**
- **An effective manager also attempts to see and understand issues from the employees' point of view. However, the manager needs to be careful here. One who is always siding with the employees and taking an attitude of "it's us against them" can create a negative environment. The point is not to side with employees against management but to attempt to understand the issues from the employees' point of view.**
- **Finally, the manager should strive to gain acceptance as the group's leader. Certainly, a manager has formal authority that is delegated from higher levels of management. However, formal authority does not guarantee effective team building.**

7 Key Factors in Dealing with Informal Work Groups

- 1. Participation in groups is a basic source of social need satisfaction for employees.**
- 2. Informal groups try to protect their members and provide security. They will try to protect members from perceived threats from management.**
- 3. Groups develop communication systems to provide information that members want. If management does not provide the information employees want, the informal group will try to obtain it.**
- 4. Both formal and informal groups obtain status and prestige within an organization. Groups may use their status and prestige as a power base to influence others in the organization.**
- 5. Groups develop and enforce norms for the behavior of members. The group norms may be supportive of management or may work against management objectives.**
- 6. The more cohesive a group, the more control it has over the behavior of its members. The highly cohesive group can produce high achievement of organizational goals. But it can work just as effectively against organizational objectives when the group opposes management.**
- 7. Both formal and informal groups within an organization establish roles that affect the activities and responsibilities of members. Accepting role responsibilities in an informal group may require that an individual violate the role expectations of management.**

Source: Human Relations in Organizations by Dan L. Costley and Ralph Todd.